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AUTHOR Dollerup, Cay; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This article argues that discussions of folktales would be more meaningful if their brief existence as "ideal tales" in a narrative contract could be accepted. The article focuses on the concept of a folktale as an object of experience and of study, by a sustained discussion and charting of the tortuous ways by which so-called folktales wind their way from their original narration to a modern reader. The article suggests that they do so by passing through "filters," i.e., changes in terms of space, time, and media, and that one of the most important "filters" may be termed "orientations," i.e. deliberate, albeit perhaps not conscious or explicit, changes wrought because of a sender's relationship to an audience (e.g. a narrator's interplay with the listeners, or an editor's attitude towards the folktale concept). The article maintains that a folktale, having passed a filter, exists in a new dimension, i.e. print. It is no longer the same as before, and the concept of "sameness" is meaningless; yet there is an indisputable relationship between tales in different dimensions, as long as they derive from the same narration. The article, in 4 sections, deals with: (1) the fluid state of the folktale; (2) the ontological status of the "ideal tale"; (3) formative elements in the creation of an "ideal tale," including filters and orientations in the recording, in the transition from ideal tale to recording, in the editing of recordings, in scholars and editors, towards the narrator, towards the tale, towards the audience, and in translation; and (4) a conclusion. (SR)

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Kurt Ranke

unter Mitwirkung von
Maja Bošković-Stulli, Zagreb · Lauri Honko, Turku
Toshio Ozawa, Tokio · Rudolf Schenda, Zürich
Donald J. Ward, Los Angeles

herausgegeben von
Rolf Wilhelm Brednich und Elfriede Moser-Rath, Göttingen

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Cay Dollerup/Bengt Holbek/Iven Reventlow/
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The Ontological Status, the Formative Elements, the "Filters" and Existences of Folktales

A Discussion *

The present article will focus on the concept of a folktale as an object of experience and of study as this is relevant to critical and folkloristic discussions of folktales. We do not claim that we are the first ones to touch upon the problems[1], but the value of the present contribution should lie in its sustained discussion and charting of the tortuous ways by which so-called folktales wind their way from their original narration to a modern reader. We shall suggest that they do so by passing through "filters", i. e. changes in terms of space, time, and media, where they come to exist in new dimensions. In these dimensions, the folktales are released in experiences, i. e. "continua", which are communal when the tales are told, and individual when the tales are read. One of the most important types of filter is what we shall term orientations, i. e. deliberate, albeit perhaps not necessarily conscious or explicit changes wrought because of a sender's relationship to an audience (e. g. a narrator's interplay with the listeners, or an editor's attitude towards the folktale concept).

At the same time, we must stress that having passed a filter and existing in a new dimension, a folktale is no longer the same as before, and that the concept of sameness is meaningless. On the other hand, there is an indisputable and indissoluble relationship between tales in different dimensions, as long as they derive

* The present article is a work from the Research Unit for Experimental Studies of Reader Response, c/o Department of English, University of Copenhagen. It is a by-product of two studies, viz. "An Interdisciplinary Turco-Danish Pilot Study of the Collective vs the Individual Nature of the Response to Literature" and "Folktale. A Cross-cultural, Interdisciplinary Study of the Experience of Literature". We gratefully acknowledge financial assistance from the UNESCO Participation Programme, the NATO Scientific Affairs Division (no. 004.82), The Danish Research Council for the Humanities, and the Department of English, University of Copenhagen.
We are thankful to the subjects in the empirical study that we refer to in section III.2.4., to the Danish Linguistic Board (Dansk Sprognævn) for their comments used in the same section; to Professor Inger Ejskjær for factual dialectal information; and to Dansk Folkemindesamling (DFS) for giving access to various manuscripts. We also wish to acknowledge comments from Professors Doltaş and Sevgen on some points. We wish to thank Allan Findlay of the Department of English at the University of Copenhagen for having checked on our English. And Vibeke Middleton for having typed the manuscript.
Quotations from lesser known languages are given in English.

[1] cf. e. g. Dawkins, R. M.: Modern Greek Folktales. Oxford 1953, xxxv: "The reader of a folktale in a book is removed by several steps from the story at its best, and that best is on the lips of a good narrator". On the subsequent pages, Dawkins hints at some of the problems discussed more systematically in the present article.

from the same narration. And—what is more—we cannot deny the legitimacy of experiences and studies of folktales at several removes, or filters, from the original narration: this is why a discussion is called for.

1.0. The fluid state of the folktale

To the outsider, the most striking feature about folktales is the extremely fluid way they are discussed, treated, and handled, which seems to call for an Aristotelian "Give me somewhere to stand, and I will move the earth". The fluid state tells in various ways:

A) In the common parlance, *Hansel and Gretel* is always *Hansel and Gretel* by the mere fact that this is the title by which the tale is known, no matter whether the words, indeed even the language, are identical or not, and independent of how the tale fares with narrators, listeners, editors, and readers. This approach has brought out studies of what people think of the "same" tale, e. g. *Red Riding Hood*, without any kind of guarantee that the tale people refer to contained the same elements—apart from the title[2]. In this context the most relevant point is, however, not our criticism, but the general consensus among narrators, editors, listeners, etc., that they discuss *Red Riding Hood* or *Hansel and Gretel*.

B) At the other extreme we find that the titles may be changed at will—as did e. g. the Grimm-brothers[3].

C) Scholars or editors who study recordings of tales from the same narrator, or different narrators, may print and discuss variations in what they claim is the "same" tale. This attitude is found as early as in the first edition of the tales of the brothers Grimm (1812) where more than one "version" may be found under one heading. This approach may even permit the editor/scholar to make up "the best version" based on a number of tales, which must then be "the" tale, or at least an approximation to it, as Wilhelm Grimm did over the years until 1857.

D) The Bolte-Polívka commentary on the Grimm-tales, the Aarne-Thompson Type Index (AaTh), and similar works are based on the assumption that provided the "basic idea" and some of the elements in the tales are identical, the tales listed at a given number are similar, comparable, or at least bear some immediately recognizable resemblance to one another, or a core of sameness.

We do not deny the usefulness of these works to scholarship. But the concept of motifs is extremely vague, moving from what orthodox literary criticism considers only figures and objects (e. g. ogress, helpers), episodes (disenchanting someone, etc.), to themes (i. e. the "basic" idea, expressed briefly); and it is therefore questionable whether tales found and discussed under the same

[2] e. g. Veszy-Wagner, L.: Little Red Riding Hoods on the Couch. In: The Psychoanalytic Forum 1 (1966) 400–408, 414 sq.

[3] cf. e. g. Panzer, F. (ed.): Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm. Vollständige Ausgabe in der Urfassung. Wiesbaden s. a., II, 22; Schoof, W.: Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Grimmschen Märchen. Hamburg 1959, 23–25.

heading can really always be treated or considered as "variations over the same theme"[4].

One example will serve to illustrate this point: AaTh 425, 425 A etc. is a widely disseminated group[5]. AaTh 425 is the *Search for the Lost Husband*, 425 A (with the AaTh reservation that there are overlappings with 425) is *The Monster (Animal) as Bridegroom*. We shall briefly touch upon three tales listed as AaTh 425 A from Greece, Turkey, and Denmark.

The Greek tale is *Musk and Amber*. It was recorded on the island of Karpathos and published by M. G. Mikhaïlidis-Nováros in *Laographiká Súmmeïkta Karpáthou* (Athens 1932–34, vol. 1, 292). An English translation by R. M. Dawkins is given under the heading *The Girl Who Married an Animal* in *Modern Greek Folktales* (Oxford 1953, 62–69):

> A girl once eats all the food at home. Her starved mother curses her and wishes that her kerchief will fly to the ogress's house. The wind blows the girl's kerchief away to it. The ogress initially wants to eat her, but apparently mollified by the girl's beauty, she takes pity on her. Instead she asks the girl to do some tasks for the wedding of her son, Musk and Amber, the next day. First the girl must clean forty rooms. A young man appears. Struck with her beauty, he promises to help her for a kiss. But she refuses to kiss him, and because of her resolution, he helps her out. This also happens at the second, composite task (including washing without soap), and the third one (stuffing mattresses with feathers). The ogress suspects that the girl has supernatural parents or is helped out by her own son. The girl is sent to the ogress's bloodthirsty sister to get fiddles for the wedding. Despite her refusal to kiss him, the young man warns her about the guardians which must be mollified at the ogress's house (e. g. figtree with wormy figs; putrid water; an exchange of dung for incense at an altar) and how to avoid being eaten by the ogress. The girl is successful and passes the grateful guardians to return to her ogress-mistress, who still suspects her son of underhand dealings with the girl. At all events he is now to be wed. He is in love with the girl and prefers her to his would-be bride, but he is also afraid of his mother. So he contrives to make the other bride-to-be insult his mother by farting[6]. She is therefore chased away, and instead Musk's mother acclaims the protagonist worthy of her son, so they are married.

The Turkish tale is *Çember-Tiyar*, published by Pertev Naili Boratav in *Az Gittik Uz Gittik* (Ankara 1969, 156–163):

> The youngest daughter of a sultan discovers that one of her father's horses is actually a handsome young man and promises to marry him. She therefore turns down other suitors, telling them that she wants to marry the horse, and is derided

[4] We shall deliberately avoid the term "motif" in the following discussion and use less ambiguous terms. A discussion of the insufficiency of the term "motif"—and an attempt to start a fruitful debate—are found in Christensen, A.: Motif et Thème (FFC 58). Helsinki 1925.

[5] The most exhaustive treatment of the type is found in Swahn, J.-Ö.: The Tale of Cupid and Psyche. Lund 1955. His study has been supplemented and partially corrected by Megas, G. A.: Das Märchen von Amor und Psyche in der griechischen Volksüberlieferung. Athens 1971, which introduces a wealth of Greek—and some Turkish—material.

[6] This is the way the boy's mother is insulted in the Greek original although the English translation says "insulted" only. We are indebted to professor Doltaş for this information.

for saying so. At a tournament, an unidentified joustler is champion. The girl cries out that he is her fiancé, and burns the trousers which keep him spell-bound. As the secret is out, the boy is transformed into a dove, tells her that she has betrayed him and that he must leave. She can find him as Çember-Tiyar when she has worn out iron sandals. When, at long last, she has done so, she meets a girl who is fetching water to Çember-Tiyar. She puts a ring in the water pail; he immediately contacts her, transforms her into an apple, and takes her home in his pocket. At home he transforms her into a human being after having made his ogre family promise not to eat her: she can serve in the household. She is given impossible tasks (to sweep/sweep not; go collect a sieve at a neighbour's [with guardians that must be mollified at the house]; fill a cauldron with tears; fill up a sack with feathers). The ogress, Çember-Tiyar's mother, is fully aware that the girl manages only by her son's help. She wants to marry her son to his cousin. On the wedding day, the sultan's daughter is tied to a pole and set on fire, but saved by Çember-Tiyar, who puts his would-be bride in her place. Çember-Tiyar and his real love escape from the ogre family through a series of complex transformations, finally to end up on the sultan's lap as roses in mid-winter. The ogre family in pursuit ask the sultan for the roses which he gives them. But the young couple avoid being devoured completely by transforming themselves into grains of millet, even though the ogres change into hens. Believing that the young couple has been annihilated, the ogres leave, and the young couple tell the sultan the facts. As the boy is now no longer a horse, the sultan agrees to their marriage.

The Danish tale, *The Little White Dog*, was collected in Southern Sealand in the 1850s, and was published by Svend Grundtvig in *Gamle danske Minder* ([Ancient Danish Relics] vol. 1. Copenhagen 1854, 100–105):

Unwittingly a peasant gives his daughter in marriage to a little white dog for some red bands. It takes her to a castle where she lives in luxury. The dog is away in the daytime and only with her at night, and even so she must not use any light. She gives birth to three boys, and then visits her father. He incites her to light a candle one night after her return, and she then sees that her husband is a prince. But she spills three drops of wax on his shirt. He wakes up, tells her that they must part for a long time and that she must from now on only look at her sons, not play with them. Once when she cannot resist the temptation to do so, the dog appears and orders her to go away and enter service with the old witch. One fine day the witch tells the peasant girl that she herself is going to get married. The girl must go to the witch's sister in Hell to get fiddlers. The dog instructs her on how to behave as she meets the guardians/obstacles (viz. by fixing a board in a bridge; by putting a loose hatch on two hinges; by turning a butter-pot for a dog; and by not eating the food offered her in Hell). The girl gets the fiddlers in a box and escapes thanks to her good deeds. But she lets out the fiddlers who are then recalled by the dog. At home she must wash black wool white for the wedding, but is unsuccessful, until the little dog helps her. She must then wash the gentleman's clothes and happens upon the shirt with the three wax drops. She then weeps so much that the shirt is soaked, and she thinks of the dog. It appears right away, and the drops disappear. When the witch sees that all the jobs have been fulfilled, she realizes that she cannot marry the little white dog. She explodes into flintstones, and the prince appears with the castle and the boys.

It will be readily appreciated that the tales cited can all in some way or other be classified as *The Monster (Animal) as Bridegroom*. By means of Jan-Öjvind Swahn's international comparative study we can also see typical Turkish/Balkan

features in the Turkish tale, e. g. that the transformed lover is a horse, the breach of faith a gossip taboo, and that the fugitives escape by changing form[7]. Similarly the male hero in the Greek tale is what Swahn claims is the unchanged animal typical in southern Europe[8]. And in the Danish tale we meet with the typical Germanic and Celtic dog-lover, and a look taboo[9].

But when we look at the way the theme "girl and boy get one another" is treated in the tales, i. e. the way we find family relationships depicted, it turns out that they are radically different on closer inspection, even when we leave out psychological and symbolic interpretations[10].

In the Greek tale, a beautiful girl is directly or indirectly forced to take service in a household whose head puts her to seemingly impossible tasks, i. e. appears to be an ogress. At the same time the mistress appreciates the girl's beauty. She is, however, domineering, and only surreptiously can her son help the humble girl who steadfastly remains chaste despite her inferior position. He is first struck with her beauty, then respects her purity. His mother long suspects him of having underhand dealings with the girl; she mentions it, but does not actively attempt to thwart them. And later he succeeds in making her discard the girl she had originally planned that he should marry, when the would-be-bride is tricked into insulting her in public. Once this has happened she is willing to have him married to the humble girl whose beauty, chastity, and human value have been proved to the groom and mother: we see two young people fight difficulties both in the tasks set by the young man's mother and her wish to have him married to another girl, a rival who is almost successful.

In the Turkish tale a girl and a boy are in love. They are the only ones to believe they can be united which demands that he proves his worth and is accepted. As the girl reveals his real identity and his attempt to gain acceptance, he must leave. Doing penance on the way, the girl must go to his place and live there. But his family also resent the alliance: they try to get rid of the girl in a number of ways and are fully aware that their attempts are thwarted only because the boy

[7] For the horse, cf. Swahn (above, not. 5) 212, and Megas (above, not. 5) 71, 88; for the gossip taboo, cf. Swahn, 236 sq., and Megas, 92, 105; for the escape, cf. Swahn, 358.

[8] cf. Swahn (above, not. 5) 231, as well as Dawkins' heading given in this article, p. 243. It is partially supported—and contradicted—by Megas (above, not. 5), as he lists "Der übernatürliche Gatte" in "Gestalt eines Tieres" and "eines menschenähnlichen Draken" (cf. 84 sq., 104).

[9] cf. Swahn (above, not. 5) 228 (dog), and 235 (look taboo). But for the latter, cf. also Megas (above, not. 5) 90–92.

[10] The examples cited above are not exhaustive, and in many cases they can only be called "trends" or typical features in so far as they appear more frequently in one area than in others—this is amply borne out by Megas' corrections. In general Swahn (and Megas) make highly interesting observations on the distributions of the various images in the types of tale under discussion (cf. Swahn and Megas [above, not. 5]). Swahn concludes his study by claiming that AaTh 425 A (identical with Swahn's own 425) is "the oldest tale" because it is the most widely distributed one. We are inclined to believe that themes in the strict, critical sense must be relevant to the culture and society in which the tales are found. And then it is no surprise to find that the most popular and widespread tale is plain "boy and girl get one another". It is fairly universal, even outside the world of fairytales.

loves and helps her. Once he is forced to take a stand (i. e. by his family's attempt to have him married to a girl he strongly resents for a wife), there is a clear break, and from now on the family actively work to have him killed. Once they are convinced they have succeeded, he is freed of his family ties and can be accepted in the girl's family.

In the Danish tale there is no similar conflict with the older generation: the beginning almost reads like the story of a poor man who reluctantly has to give his daughter as a mistress to somebody at a higher social level. However this may be, the lovers do have children, and once the woman sees her husband the way he really is, and loves him as such, she also commits a breach of faith. It is the man who is in absolute command of the atonement she must undergo, and it is not until she proves repentant and yet loving (by weeping) that he accepts her fully and they are reunited. The tale deals with two lovers, or a husband and wife, who are separated or alienated because of a breach of confidence; it is an estrangement in married life which is threatened by intrusion of a rival, another, more powerful woman, in the man's life.

At what is commonly termed the thematic level in criticism, the Greek tale is a straightforward narrative of a girl who succeeds in convincing her mother-in-law that she is worthy of her son. The Turkish one of a young couple successfully united against family opposition. And the Danish one of estrangement between lovers in (semi)married life: within the normal confines of literary criticism, these tales cannot be considered "variations on the same theme", and they ought not uncritically to be lumped together the way they are in the AaTh Index: what at first glance seems to be a core of sameness is only superficial similarity.

II.0. The ontological status of the "ideal tale"

It is reasonable to assume that the fluid nature of the folktale derives from the non-proprietarian attitude of the narrators: they consider a tale the "same", even though there are considerable variations the way they tell it on different occasions and they often consider the tale they tell the "same" as the one they heard from somebody else[11]. This attitude leads to a definition of a tale as the "same" story told by anyone who can tell it and claims it is the "same", i. e. it is totally independent of the narrator (who is arbitrary)[12].

The problem is not with the narrators whose attitude is understandable enough: they only pass on the traditional view from generation to generation. But the problem arises when this widespread idea is taken over uncritically by students of folklore because the point of departure they construct on this basis

[11] e. g. Lundbo Levy, J.: Hans i vadestøvlerne. En studie i mundtlig fortælleteknik. Copenhagen 1968, who studied three versions the same narrator told her of the "same tale". The narrator, whose longest version lasted about one hour, had heard it from his father. He told it repeatedly and his longest version lasted 3 to 4 hours.

[12] In his article: Toward an Understanding of Storytelling Events. In: Journal of American Folklore 82 (1969) 313–328, here 323, R. A. Georges aptly terms a narrator viewn from this angle "incidental".

excludes other views or leads to questions which show that the original position is untenable:

The brothers Grimm, the Danish editor Svend Grundtvig, and other romantically inspired folklorists assumed—roughly speaking—that the tales originally found among the people constitute *gesunkenes Kulturgut* (i. e. the tales collected are forms of "original" tales which have been corrupted by the common people, by poor memory, by sheer vulgarity, etc.)[13]. This view leads to a definition of a tale as "a corrupt form of a specific original tale—which can possibly be reconstituted by means of many corrupt forms", a view which affected Wilhelm Grimm's editing of German tales. But it is logically impossible to compare what is aprioristically said to be the "same". And who decides what is most beautiful? How does the editor know what parts are "best" and hence closest to the original *Urform*, or archetypes? And how many *Urforms* do we have at all? For, as we have shown, we cannot say that the AaTh Index offers full coverage of the themes in tales lumped together. And finally, the problem is that most narrators are creative, and not passive recipients—a fact which was first pointed out by Achim von Arnim to the Grimm brothers and which has been repeatedly proved by subsequent collectors[14].

An even unsounder approach is posited as follows: "[Unlike ordinary literature whose chronology in the process of creation is fixed,] the process of production which lies before the final recording of [...] a tale is an abstract entity [because it is not documented, i. e. recorded]. Any kind of theory about this process must be made on hindsight and is a postulate. As far as written literature is concerned, the results of a process of production can exist as a series of drafts. As far as folktales are concerned, all transformations brought about by the process of production exist only and exclusively by having one final recording of it"[15]. In the first place this implies that a tale never existed unless it is taken down, i. e. the essentially oral existence of tales is disregarded. And, secondly, it follows that the specific form the recording of the tale gets is somehow or other "the tale". The definition of a tale is: "a tale is a recording".

In the above we have singled out some views to show that they were problematic, but we have only scratched the surface: our purpose is not to present an exhaustive survey of views, but only to illustrate that these views exclude some approaches or suffer from flaws. And because this is so, it becomes hard to discuss tales.

It appears to be more fruitful to turn to some of the concepts of "folklore in context" and its "story-telling, or communicative, event". We can accept that a tale told is a "holistic", "unique", "dynamic", and "complex communicative

[13] It must be stressed that we do not consider the treatment theories exhaustive: we only indicate some of the views taken. For the views of Jacob Grimm see, e. g. Bolte, J./ Polívka, G.: Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm 1–5. Reprint Hildesheim 1963, t. 4, 426 sq.

[14] cf. e. g. Panzer (above, not. 3) 36.

[15] Translated from Hansen, B.: Folkeeventyr. Struktur og genre. Copenhagen 1971, 10. Hansen is, incidentally, fully aware that a recorder may affect a narrator (p. 16 sq.).

event"[16], and that it is "a definite realistic, artistic and communicative process" where there is "no dichotomy between processes and products"[17]. On the other hand, we must question the implications of phrases like "The message of a story-telling event has no existence 'outside' the story-telling event itself"[18], and "The telling is the tale"[19]. For if we accept their full and logical ramifications, it would mean that the experience and study of folktales were impossible outside the actual "story-telling event"—surely an untenable position: even proponents of the school accept that when folklorists witness an oral performance, they cannot observe and record information without having a point of view[20]—which fact somehow or other must restrict and limit the recording, study, and analysis of the holistic event.

In the present context we are concerned with folktales: they are heard, read and studied as folktales, even divorced from the storytelling event, and it therefore falls beyond the scope of the present article to discuss whether they are folklore outside the communicative event[21]. We must stress that there is an indissoluble relationship between the oral tale and tales derived from it: but we cannot accept that the narration is the "real habitat"[22] of a tale—it is its indisputable premise, but no more: the tale existing outside the storytelling event is different from the one inside, but both have an existence. With these modifications it appears as if a tenable starting point for a discussion runs as follows:

An authentic tale is any tale told by one specific narrator, at one specific place in time and space, in an interplay with a specific audience, and accepted as a tale by both narrator and audience.

A tale is thus pinned down to a specific social frame of reference. On the one hand, it is readily appreciated that this view means that every single narrative situation is unique and that the tale told is so, too[23]: for sameness of storytelling event cannot be reconstituted completely. Therefore the authentic tale

16 These terms are all used by R. A. Georges in various places.
17 Ben-Amos, D.: Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context. In: Journal of American Folklore 84 (1971) 3–15, here 10.
18 Georges (above, not. 12) 323.
19 Ben-Amos (above, not. 17) 10.
20 cf. e. g. Ben-Amos, D./Goldstein, K. S. (edd.): Folklore. Performance and Communication. The Hague/Paris 1975, 4.
21 The main point of Ben-Amos (above, not. 17) is that folklore is only a process.
22 ibid., 10.
23 Some of the points in the subsequent discussion of the storytelling events have been made by Georges as well. The approach to the problems differs: Georges sets up his postulates (on which we agree) by induction, and then uses these postulates about the storytelling event to reject the theories we discuss in section I.O. This is contrary to our way of establishing the "ideal tale" as the focus: it is the very weaknesses of the other theories which force us to deduce the importance of the "ideal tale". But in addition the emphases in the two articles are radically different: Georges focusses on the storytelling event and concludes by advocating intensive research into it—which has then been done by many adherents of contextual folklore. What we explore is the fact—mentioned, if not down-right rejected by Georges (above, not. 12,323)—that (part of) the message of the storytelling event has an existence outside the "storytelling event", but that this existence is so different, that there is no identity.

is "ideal" in the sense that we cannot be completely sure of its real nature in all its ramifications.

On the other hand it is now possible to approach the "ideal tale" and determine aspects of the "ideality", e. g. by means of comparisons, and thus establish parts of it.

In the narrative situation then, the "ideal tale" exists and can be experienced; and it can also be approached by means of a recording, as long as we keep in mind that this recording is not identical with the "ideal tale": it is a reflection of it in other dimensions, determined, modified or circumscribed by e. g. the means of recording, and the distance in time and space. The "ideal tale" told in a unique narrative situation never makes it in its complete form to an audience outside the storytelling event[24].

Nevertheless, it is now easier to focus on some formative elements in the "ideal tale", and changes tales are subjected to on their way to another audience. Although there is considerable overlapping in practice, we shall try to make some distinctions between the formative elements in the unique narrative situation; in the recording; in editing on various levels and occasions; in audience-orientation; and in translations. Even so, we must stress that we do not consider the subsequent discussion exhaustive.

III.0. Formative elements in the creation of an "ideal tale"

A figure illustrating some of the most important features in the creation of an "ideal tale" looks as follows[25]:

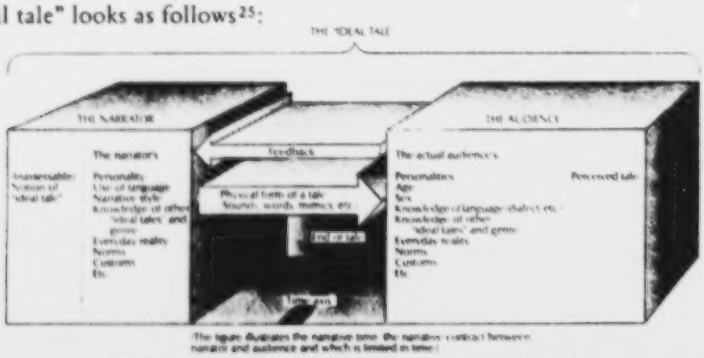

Figure of some formative elements in an "ideal tale"

24 We use the term "ideal tale" instead of "storytelling event" to indicate that our concern is with the direction the narrative contents get. A sign of displeasure in the audience is part of the "storytelling event" and a formative factor in an "ideal tale" in so far as the narrator and hence the narrative are affected by it: but it cannot be claimed that it is part of the narrative as such. Furthermore we wish to stress that the telling of the tale has a clearly identifiable beginning and an end (Georges' diagramme [above, not. 12, 320 sq.] covers what goes before and follows to indicate the social interaction). In general it is noted that Georges discusses the formative elements in more detail than is relevant for our purposes.

25 Our illustration differs on the points mentioned in the previous footnotes from Georges' diagrammatic representation (above, not. 12, 320 sq.). But the two ways of viewing the telling of a tale are not mutually exclusive.

12

The "ideal tale" then, exists as a holistic, unique entity in what has been termed "a single continuum"[26], in a dimension with social interaction between the original sender and his audience as instantaneous and immediate feedback. The most decisive factor for the genesis of an "ideal tale" is that the telling of a tale must be a social act in order to be meaningful. We could term the premises for this social act, i. e. the creation of an "ideal tale", a narrative contract between the narrators and their audiences: the narrators must be willing to tell a tale, and similarly the audiences must be willing to hear one[27]. Once this contract has been established, the narrator can start, but it also means that in subtle ways, e. g. conformity to the norms and wishes of the audience, which may become explicit, telling a tale is two-way communication. And once the tale is finished, the narrative contract is over: the tale has ceased to exist in its "ideal form".

When we turn to the narrators there are two extremes: at one end we meet with those who relate "ideal tales" the same way each time they are narrated, or attempt to do so (possibly because of audience demand): they therefore supply the recorder(s) with almost identical reflections/recordings of the "ideal tales"[28]. At the other extreme are narrators who purposely introduce a layer of personal features, in terms of episodes, private reflections, personal style, etc., to each "ideal tale", i. e. every time they tell a tale. This means that recordings of their "ideal tales" will show marked differences in relation to what the narrator considers the same tale[29].

In terms of the narrator's interplay with the audience, its expectations in terms of genre, style, contents, which are in most cases also based on previous "ideal tales"—perhaps even by the same narrator—will also affect what it accepts within the narrative contract.

[26] viz. by Ben-Amos (above, not. 17) 10, but our application is more strict.

[27] The point about the audience was first made by Bogatyrev, P./Jakobson, R.: Die Folklore als eine besondere Form des Schaffens. In: Donum natalicium Schrijnen. Nijmegen/Utrecht 1929, 901–913, on p. 903, but is fully recognized, and discussed e. g. by Georges (above, not. 12).

[28] A well-known example is Dorothea Viehmann who told tales to the Grimm brothers in 1813–1814; but in view of Wilhelm Grimm's relaxed attitude to tales, she may not have been all that accurate. Rikard Berge who collected something like 700–800 tales in Telemarken in Norway, cites one example of two recordings from the same narrator at an interval of one year (Ch. III [see below] 49 sq.) which do show striking similarites—but not total identity. He terms the style "bound". Rikard Berge published his essays "Norsk eventyrstil" in instalments in "Norsk folkekultur" (henceforth Nf) as follows: Chapter I, Nf 1 (1915) 12–21; Ch. II, Nf 3 (1917) 145–150; Ch. III, Nf 4 (1918) 49–79; Ch. IV, Nf 5 (1919) 156–172; Ch. V, Nf 7 (1921) 64–68; Ch. VI, Nf 12 (1926) 64–72; Ch. VII, Nf 16 (1930) 118–122; Ch. VIII, Nf 19 (1933) 41–65. References in this article are made to chapters.

[29] e. g. Lundbo Levy (above, not. 11) and Berge (in his various articles [above, not. 28]) found that tales do bear the imprint of the narrator's personality. cf. also the Danish folklorist Evald Tang Kristensen's comments: "It is no use to ask the informant to tell once more exactly the way he did previously, for he cannot and will not; although it is largely a tale learnt by heart, it is no jingle, and he puts into it some of his own, indeed tells with his body and always accompanies his narration with mimes "(Æventyr fra Jylland. Anden Samling. Copenhagen 1884, IX). Kristensen collected approximately 2,600 tales in the AaTh groups, and is one of the foremost collectors in the world.

Similarly there is no doubt that some kind of censorship is operative in the narrator as well as in the audience, although the exact nature of it is difficult to determine[30]. This connects with the norms and norm system which the narrator must—to some extent at least—have in common with his audience and social class: to illustrate this we shall use an English ballad (Child num. 140, reprinted in the Norton Anthology and hence easily accessible), *Robin Hood and the Three Squires*. In this ballad Robin Hood goes to Nottingham, where he saves three of his men from being hanged for poaching. The norms are explicitly as follows: to have fun is to get drunk with friends ("Here are twenty pieces of good broad gold,/Go feast thy brethren with wine." [46 sq.]). Crimes in this universe are to destroy ordinary people's property, to attack religion, to commit rape, or adultery ("'O have they parishes burnt?' he said,/'Or have they ministers slain? Or have they robbed any virgin,/Or with other men's wives have lain?'" [12–16]). Poaching is not punishable (23), and people in authority, viz., the sheriff, as well as their menials, viz., the hangman (88), are evil and should be killed, while one must always show solidarity with one's equals and men ("They hanged the proud sheriff on [the gallows],/Released their own three men" [115 sq., the end]): the whole norm system in the ballad is largely identical with that of the suppressed lower classes.

Similarly, there are some fairly obvious norms in the tales we cited above from the AaTh 425 A type (see section I.0. above): the Greek tale shows respect for religion (as the girl must put incense in front of the altar); and that chastity is rewarded. And both the Greek and the Danish tales have strong undercurrents of anger with unreasonable mistresses (who are therefore ogresses or witches).

As mentioned above, this list is not exhaustive, and among the formative factors are some which are less easily assessed, and which may play a different role on different occasions, e. g. unrest in the audience.

III.1. "Filters" and "orientations"

Once the oral narrative is over, the narrative contract between narrator and audience comes to an end, and with it the unique narrative situation and hence the "ideal tale". Like every speech made by an individual, it was an irreversible "parole"[31]. If the "ideal tale" is rejected by society, or does not affect conventions, or another "ideal tale", it can be argued that it disappears for ever in the folkloristic tradition[32]. On the other hand, it may affect one or more subsequent "ideal tales" in which case it does leave some traces in folkloristic tradition. And, then, provided there has been a narrative contract comprising a recorder in the

[30] e. g. Bogatyrev/Jakobson (above, not. 27) 903: „Bei der Untersuchung der Folklore muß man stets als Grundbegriff – die Präventivzensur der Gemeinschaft im Auge behalten."

[31] Bogatyrev/Jakobson's (above, not. 27) parallels between linguistics and folkloristic material are extremely apt.

[32] ibid., 901 sq.

storytelling event, it may be recorded, which—as hinted—means that a reflection of some aspects of the "ideal tale" are preserved in another medium than the oral tradition.

III.1.1. "Filters" in the recording

In principle, the recorder will be on a par with the ordinary audience. In practice this is not necessarily so: but it stands to reason that if the recorder is part of a large audience, his chances of participating in two-way communication with the narrator are smaller than if he is the only person present, the one with whom the narrative contract is established. Since we must approach the "ideal tale" by means of a recording, it is hopeless to assess the exact extent of a recorder's influence, if any, on the "ideal tale" recorded. We may, however, venture some hypotheses:

Provided the recorder knows his informants and they are at ease, the "ideal tale" recorded will be close to one which might, in principle, have been told to the narrator's ordinary audience. If, on the other hand, the recorder is not able to set the narrator at ease, but exudes condescension, we may expect, e. g. that potential "ideal tales" whose norm systems and contents the narrator aprioristically assumes will arouse displeasure, are left out; that "vulgar" features present in previous "ideal tales" reflected in the one told, are suppressed; and with luck the recorder may even throw the narrator off balance by lifting an eyebrow.

Although the above-mentioned features do belong to the formative elements of an "ideal tale", there are one or two very important features to note in relation to the recording of a tale and its "original" social context: more often than not, the narrator will belong to a non-literate class (frequently the lower classes), while the recorder belongs to the literate middle classes. This implies that the narrative contract between the narrator and the recorder in the narrative situation is different from the one existing between the narrator and his usual audience: the "ideal tale" recorded was already at this stage prised loose from its "authentic", immediate social context, especially if the recorder was the only person present.

As far as the actual method of recording goes there are great differences with subtle gradations in between them in various procedures. At one extreme are films and tape-recordings of the narrative situation, where the narrator's mimics, gestures, and changes in the tone of voice as well as the audience reaction are preserved. At the other extreme the recorder relies on only key words for a totally free rendering of the "ideal tale"—a technique used by e. g. Clemens Brentano. And in between are exact wordings or partially exact renderings.

There is, of course, no doubt that today many "ideal tales" recorded on tapes and films do make it to the records, the archives, and the like, on a word to word

basis[33]. Formerly recorders had to rely on memory, notation, or some stenographic system. Anyone familiar with professional consecutive interpreting will be aware that even recorders who had to rely exclusively on memory, cannot automatically be written off as "poor": much depends on the recorder, and it requires a close study of tales made by one recorder to find out whether the recorder has used his/her own "parole", or whether we are, at the purely linguistic level, pretty close to the "ideal tale" in so far as we get the narrator's words and phrases. It can, for instance, easily be shown that Evald Tang Kristensen (1843–1929) who relied on some kind of rapid notation and memory, did in effect preserve a high number of idiosyncratic linguistic peculiarities with his informants, even though his recordings are not verbatim. And at the opposite extreme, it is obvious that some of the educated people from all over Denmark who sent in tales to another collector, Svend Grundtvig, in the 1850s and '60s, replaced the original dialectal styles of their informants with their own sociolects before passing on the recordings.

But at the very lowest linguistic level, where we talk about individual words, we already meet with the first problem because the social contract in the narrative situation is outside the narrator's normal social context: the recorder meets with unfamiliar words. In Turkey, P. N. Boratav asked the narrators about the meaning of words he did not understand, and then substituted the original words with well-known synonyms[34]. In a manuscript sent to Svend Grundtvig on 18 October 1854, a young Danish recorder, Miss Nanna Reedtz (b. 1833), had apparently turned most of the "ideal tales" she heard from a little boy in Jutland into standard Danish. However, faced with the unorthodox word "Mønhunde", she preserved it and suggested in a parenthesis that the word was a variant of "Mynde", i. e. greyhounds (unpublished ms., Dansk Folkemindesamling [DFS], Bl. 1–55[1]). In another tale, recorded in his usual careful manner by Evald Tang Kristensen in April 1888 from Ane Dorotea Jensdatter, *The Girl and the Dog* (unrevised ms., DFS, ETK num. 1350) we meet with one of the tales usually grouped as AaTh 425 (B) (or 428—without a Uriah letter, but with a task which ought to bring about the protagonist's death). The last task is to go to Hell after a cake. On her way to Hell, the girl must follow the instructions of a dog as how to placate the guardians. The original manuscript runs "then you come to a 'Høl'; you must go under it; but here [I give you] a pair of 'Hængsler' [i. e. something for hanging things on] that you can use for hanging it in/on so that it does not fall down [. . .]". Evald Tang Kristensen usually gave lists of dialect words in the tales he published, and in this case he was aware that the first untranslated word would be unfamiliar. So at the end of the manuscript he made a guess, based on the many Danish tales where we do meet with a hatch without hinges (see above, section I.0., *The Little White Dog*): "A 'Høl' must be a hatch used for covering an opening. She was to

[33] The point in Georges' article (above, not. 12) is to advocate as complete a coverage of the storytelling event as possible by means of imaginative use of films and the like.
[34] We are indebted to Professor Dilek Doltaş for this information.

enter by an opening". The real meaning required the use of later dialect dictionaries and a check on the narrator's background: her father had been a "Hølesmed", i. e. a smith making scythes for cutting hay. This makes the passage understandable: the girl must give a s c y t h e some hooks to hang on, so that it is kept off the ground and does not get rusty (later the witch demands that it fall down to kill the girl).

The three approaches to the same problem are radically different: Boratav refers to the sender, checks right away, and then substitutes. Miss Reedtz gives the evidence and her own suggestion but refers the actual decision to "an authority". And Evald Tang Kristensen preserves the original and gives his own, virtually authoritative explanation. But if he had exchanged the word for a synonym there would forever have been a slightly puzzling passage in an otherwise fine recording.

The question about individual words is, of course, special because we meet with it in fairly exact recordings of "ideal tales" only. However, other forces are operative at the recording level as well. Even when we disregard the question of gross deviations introduced by e. g. faulty memory, there are other pitfalls: the recorder's ignorance of the specific social context in which the narrator operates will, of course, tell much more frequently with less experienced recorders than, e. g. Evald Tang Kristensen whose error at this level we have just discussed. Similarly recorders may, consciously or unconsciously, suppress episodes and features in the recording of the "ideal tale" which are not in keeping with their moral, religious, or political norm systems: as we showed above (section III.0.) the narrators' norms may not be identical with middle-class norms.

And finally, of course, recorders may be affected by the way they look at tales, i. e. whether the narrator tells a tale according to the ideas the recorder has of how they should be told. In the 1819 "Foreword" to their tales, the brothers Grimm stressed the fact that Dorothea Viehmann "bewahrte die alten Sagen fest im Gedächtnis". And the Norwegian collector Jørgen Moe similarly made loaded comments on two narrators, who, respectively, rendered every "ideal tale" individually, or stuck as closely as possible to previous "ideal tales": "All [the tales told by a lame tailor] bore the imprint of a rich imagination in their composition, and the man's narration was lively; but he lacked the precision in expression—when the tale was repeated the second time—which made [Ms] Odden's recital so eminently fine. Besides he has been corrupted as a result of reading tall tales and other bad literature for the common folk. So it is not easy to retell his tales"[35].

A tentative list of "filters" operative in the recording could be set up as follows:

S t a g e 1 (Premise):

O. An "ideal tale" existing in an irreversible dynamic "continuum", with social interaction comprising two-way communication, and limited in time.

[35] Quoted from Berge (above, not. 28) Ch. IV, 166 sq.

Stage 2:

1.1. The reflection (the memory) of the "ideal tale" passes out of the oral tradition (it is forgotten, rejected, etc.).

1.2. The reflection (the memory) of the "ideal tale" affects subsequent "ideal tales", wholly or in part.

2. An "ideal tale" is recorded:
   A. with an audience which is largely an "ordinary audience" for the narrator = more influence and feedback from the audience, and—often—less influence from the recorder.
   B. with only the recorder present = new type of narrative contract with subsequent loss of wider social context. Possibly more influence and feedback from the recorder, affecting repertory told, contents and the like.

3. The recording is made by means of e. g.
   A. Video = preservation of immediate social context; narrator's mimics and delivery; possibly audience feedback.
   B. Tapes = preservation of tone of voice and the like.
   C. Stenography = exact words, in some cases possibly including intonation.
   D. Partially correct wording = contents largely preserved.
   E. Free rendering based on memory/notation of key words = preservation of some ideas, episodes and the like.

4. The loss of the immediate social context, and the changed nature of the narrative contract implies that there are:
   A. Difficulties with the "decoding" on the recorder's part of specific words.
   B. Difficulties with the comprehension of concepts, images and everyday phenomena.
   C. Moral, religious, political prejudices, and the like.

It is important to note, first, that all the "filters" presuppose the existence of an "ideal tale", hence its appearance in the table as a premise. Secondly, it must be noted that although all these filters do potentially involve a loss of what would have been a tale's normal social context, this tells only on the end result. But it is at this stage that the loss really begins. Thirdly, all the above filters are, in some way or other, more or less part of the narrative contract between the narrator and the recorder: both have some influence on the outcome, e. g. by selecting, suppressing, embellishing, and clarifying. But it is equally important to stress that because of the very nature of this narrative contract, it is one in which all forces are at play, i. e. the weight of the different filters cannot be easily assessed, if at all: whatever the outcome, it cannot be disputed or questioned.

III.1.2. The "ideal tale" and the recording: a crucial transition

Whatever the relationship between the "ideal tale" and the recording of it, something special happens once the oral narrative is committed to paper (for the

purposes of the ensuing discussion we shall disregard other means of preservation): To put it naively, we lift one tale, told by a specific narrator, at one specific point in time and space, to one specific audience, out of this unique situation. The tale becomes independent of the physical presence of the narrator and his audience: there is no narrative contract, and the formative elements in the creation of the "ideal tale", e. g. instantaneous feedback, can no longer exert any influence.

The "ideal tale" existed in a dynamic, holistic, social or c o m m u n a l "continuum", in a specific, limited and unrepeatable dimension. A more or less accurate reflection of the "ideal tale" now exists in a new medium, in another dimension: letters in print. They, in turn, are a stimulus which has permanence in physical terms and whose contents are released in a new experience, in an i n d i v i d u a l "continuum", every time the tale is read by a reader/editor, etc. The experience and the "continuum" are without a social interplay with the sender/narrator. To all intents and purposes we are now dealing with a tale which is, ontologically speaking, little different from "ordinary literature". We shall disregard the discussion about the latter's ontological status, but content ourselves with pointing out that it cannot be claimed that the authentic, the "ideal tale" can be identical with the printed one.

We think many critics overlook the implications of this transition to permanence. Although it still retains its indissoluble relationship with the "ideal tale", we are now dealing with a tale that has other dimensions than the "ideal tale", because it is written. It is different from the authentic tale as it can have synchronic existence in different "continua" in so far as a tale can be read (or heard) by more than one audience/reader at a time. And a printed tale also has diachronic existence, in so far as it can be read by readers/audiences in different epochs. And within the epochs, it can also be read synchronically. Especially the diachronic aspect is a strong filter in removing tales from the social context of the "ideal tales" from which they derive.

III.2. "Orientations" in the editing of recordings

It is, in fact, impossible to make clear-cut distinctions between the filters that can be brought to bear on tales after they have been recorded and become physical, written objects: we know that all the filters that we are going to discuss may be operative at any time, at any level, and that they do not have any progressive order: they overlap. And in practice, it often turns out that the order of the filters is changed at will, and that the same type of filter is applied over and over again in relation to tales derived from the same "ideal tale". We shall, nevertheless, attempt to discuss the filters. The following table may serve as a kind of point of departure, but it is far from exhaustive; and it is designed to supplement, rather than just to illustrate the following discussion of the complex issues:

A table of some "filters" and "orientations" in editing

1. The editors' backgrounds:
   - A. Scholarly editor for scholarly public:
     1. attitude towards/evaluation of the narrator, etc.
     2. attitude towards/evaluation of the recorder, e. g. distrust.
     3. linguistic shortcomings, censorship, etc.
   - B. Scholarly editor for non-scholarly public: same points as 1.A + selection of tales to be published, e. g. rejection of immoral, vulgar, and sacrilegious tales.
   - C. Non-scholarly editor: same points as 1.A and B + very strong motivation to further sales, i. e. linguistic and norm changes + acceptance of publisher's interference.
2. The linguistic problems:
   - A. Synchronic (especially dialect words, transference of oral style).
   - B. Diachronic (same as point 2.A + archaic words, archaic style).
3. The norm-systems and references to everyday life:
   - A. Synchronic (new audience from different age group, or social class).
   - B. Diachronic (new audience from different social class + disappearance of many phenomena [e. g. customs, tools, etc.] in the recorded tale).
4. Orientations in editing (connecting with point 1.A–C, above):
   - A. "Sender"/the narrator:
     "fidelity",
     "oral style",
     comprehensibility, etc.
   - B. "Message"/the tale:
     1. the "best" narrator,
     2. the "best" recording,
     3. the *Urform* (permitting of, e. g. embellishment, addition, suppression, "improvement", etc.).
   - C. "Addressee"/the audience:
     1. scholarly, i. e. demand for "fidelity",
     2. non-scholarly grown-ups, e. g. selection,
     3. children, e. g. permitting of prettification.
5. Translation: loss of national/cultural rooting.

In the following discussion we shall not follow the divisions in the above table strictly, but rather discuss some points in contexts where it seems most reasonable.

III.2.1. The scholars and the editors

Since many recorders have also edited tales, there is no clear-cut division between the two. At one extreme we find editors who received material from

recorders and published it, e. g. Svend Grundtvig; and at the other extreme those who have published tales they themselves have collected like Evald Tang Kristensen; and in between, editors who followed the Grimm-brothers' method of collecting themselves and receiving tales from others as well. In the case of Grundtvig the functions of editor and recorder are clearly divided, in the case of Evald Tang Kristensen they are fused.

More relevant is, perhaps, the scholar/editor's attitude towards the recording in terms of its quality. If the editor considers the narrator "good", "corrections" will be fewer, than in the case of narrators who are considered "poor": a case in point is Wilhelm Grimm's recordings of Dorothea Viehmann where he explicitly mentions in the 1819 edition that some passages are printed verbatim. Similarly it is fairly obvious that even though Svend Grundtvig received c. 800 tales from other recorders in Denmark in the 1850s and '60s, he did not consider all narrators, recorders, and recordings equally good: only c. 100 of them were printed in his three collections.

Another point is the selection of the tales actually chosen for printing. It follows that they are selected on the basis of quality, but other aspects may be taken into consideration as well: Evald Tang Kristensen, for instance, abstained from publishing (but not from recording) tales which he found vulgar[36].

The editor may also be circumscribed in other ways in relation to the tale, so that he may have difficulty in e. g. understanding specific words and actions, especially, of course, if the distance in time and space to the "ideal tale" and the original, first recording, is great. But this, as well as later, additional orientations sometimes made in the tales, is better discussed in connection with the "orientation" the editor chooses to give the tales to be published.

III.2.2. "Orientations" towards the narrator

Editors can choose carefully to preserve the words from the horse's mouth, including unfamiliar words, the narrators' idiosyncratic use of "langue", the oral cadence, the fluent flow of words, and the images and norm-systems embedded in the tales. Evald Tang Kristensen, for instance, showed a high degree of loyalty towards his narrators, even in the tales he published, and, as mentioned, he tried to ensure comprehension by including lists of dialect words: his "orientation" was towards the sender, towards the "ideal tale". But in doing so, he paid no regard to the orientation the tales get once they are committed to print: they come to exist in another dimension, and can only be read, i. e., come to life in new and different "continua"—a point to which we shall return below.

III.2.3. "Orientations" towards the tale

We have posited that a sound discussion of authentic folktales presupposes that we accept an "ideal tale" which can be approached by means of recordings. It

[36] Kristensen, E. T.: Æventyr fra Jylland. Fjerde Samling. Aarhus 1897, "Forord".

follows that we should therefore only accept tales connected with, i. e. "made from" recordings of individual "ideal tales". The approach does not exclude the possibility of comparing tales; and tales and literature; etc.

Accordingly, we consider it perfectly legitimate for editors to take into account for instance:

1. Their preference for one specific recording out of a larger number of tales dealing with largely "identical" themes or with other features in common, i. e. what they consider e. g. the most exact, beautiful, or "best" recording. The principle is used explicitly by R. M. Dawkins in his selection of Greek tales: "In choosing what to translate I have tried to pick out the best variant of each type [...]" (*Modern Greek Folktales*, xix). But it is usually, if at all, applied at a less conscious level by editors, e. g. Svend Grundtvig when he chose the tales to print in his *Gamle danske Minder* (Copenhagen 1854–61).

2. Their evaluation of whether a specific recording is influenced by the "literary" tradition, then to discard it. This principle has, to some extent, been used by the Grimm-brothers, and was explicitly used by Evald Tang Kristensen[37]. Or any other e x p l i c i t reason for rejecting tales, e. g. that they are well-known, or have been printed before[38].

But editors—including the brothers Grimm and Svend Grundtvig—have also used more questionable approaches, based on their beliefs that the tales recorded represent *gesunkenes Kulturgut*, corrupted by being handled by the common folk. In 1854, in his call to the Danes to record folklore, Grundtvig follows the Grimms when he speaks of "these old relics which have in some cases passed down to us through a millenium or more and contain so much information about the life and thinking of our forefathers [...]". He enjoins interested parties to take down all material, even if heard elsewhere, for he believes that provided the same story is told in various districts "it can be concluded that it must be old, since it has moved that far and fixed its roots in many places—which takes time"[39]. As mentioned above, this way of thinking permits of the view that there was one original, real, and truly beautiful tale, parts of which are now found in corrupt and incomplete forms: the editor's task is to re-establish this *Urform*, or at least use his discretion and aprioristic knowledge about its "real" nature for editing. Grundtvig's works illustrate various stages in this process:

Grundtvig's three volumes of *Gamle danske Minder* were, if not rigidly accurate, then at least reasonably scholarly since they were directed towards the then "educated elite". As previously mentioned, his recorders were educated people, schoolmasters, governesses, gentry etc. Grundtvig printed some of the material sent to him, but had few scruples about making changes, albeit minor ones. This is rarely documented in the printed tales, but in one case, viz., *Whitebear, the*

[37] ibid.

[38] e. g. R. M. Dawkins lists the various criteria he used for his "Modern Greek Folktales" (above, not. 1) in his "Introduction", and thus gives more reasons than the ones listed by us.

[39] Grundtvig, S.: Gamle danske Minder I. Copenhagen 1854, "Forord".

King's Son (vol. 1, 35–45), Grundtvig is handling material from one of his finest recorders, Niels Levinsen, M. A. And here, all of a sudden, he feels the need to explain two "improvements": the tale belongs to the AaTh 425 group, and deals with the estranged couple. To regain her husband, the wife has to go on a journey. She is cold and therefore goes into a castle where—according to the recording—she gets "coffee". This Grundtvig changes into the non-descript "a hot drink": in other words he edits out a realistic modern feature, because he has aprioristically determined that the tale is old: according to his thinking, he brings the tale closer to the "original" *Urform*.

When the wife breaks the promise of never seeing her husband, the original recording has the wife admire her handsome husband quietly, whereon he wakes up to inform her that she shall never see him again. Here Grundtvig inserts the episode with the candle and the three drops of wax (cf. section I.0., *The Little White Dog*), because this detail "is so central to this fairytale that the editor has considered it justifiable to insert it here in this otherwise excellent recording, as it has been left out only by one narrator—perhaps even on only one occasion". Here then, the criterion is loyalty towards the form and content of the "original" *Urform*.

In three volumes, *Danske Folkeæventyr, efter utrykte Kilder gienfortalte af Svend Grundtvig* (Copenhagen 1876–84), Grundtvig retold tales in a reconstructed form. In his postscript to the first volume he stresses that this is a popularized, unscholarly collection: he has taken freedoms with the presentation of the tales. He preserves the simple, folksy tone, but shies away from the "offensive vulgarity, which so often pervades this type of ancient relics of the Danish people, as presented by the lower classes nowadays". What he promises is "that although none of these fairytales will be found in the oral tradition in the very form in which they appear here, yet every one of them will, wherever it is known, be recognized, accepted and appreciated as the same fairytale, often in a more complete and more pure form than it is now found at any specific locality: a form which must, however, have existed prior to the often falsified and distorted forms in which it is now found" (our spacing)[40].

The reason why we have chosen Grundtvig is that he was honest about what he did. But his example is definitely not followed by all editors. The point is, then, that editors who apply principles like the above have replaced loyalty towards the narrators with something we could term preconceived ideas and their own whims: and the more they do so, the more they obscure the social reality in which an "ideal tale" was told.

[40] id.: Danske Folkeæventyr I. Copenhagen 1876, 231 sq. This information is not given in the English translation of vol. 2 (from 1878), viz., Hein, G.: Danish Fairy Tales from Svend Grundtvig. London 1914.

III.2.4. "Orientation" towards the audience

As mentioned above (section III.1.2.), the "ideal tale" is not identical with the recorded one, but only reflects it; and the same goes for the printed tale: the tales exist in new dimensions in terms of media, time and space. There is, furthermore, no audience listening in a social interplay with feedback in a single communal "continuum", but a number of readers who recreate the tale in individual "continua" without the possibility of instantaneous feedback to the narrator. The audience tends to be more literate, and is often middle-class: a narrative contract can be said to exist in so far as they want to read the tale, but the social context is radically different. And this poses some problems concerning loyalty towards the narrator, even for those editors who give this aspect pride of place:

First of all, there is a problem about the faithful rendering of the oral delivery in print. Of course, punctuation may to some extent be a substitute for changes in tone of voice and intonation. And typography can be used to make special oral features stand out[41]. But the basic problem remains: does an oral style produce the same effect when r e a d as when it was originally heard? The answer is clearly 'no': to most readers the uncritical rendering of the oral style may sometimes be charming, but it may also frequently be clumsy, and it gives the reader a somewhat condescending idea of the narrator's intelligence. In the empirical study which inspired the present article, the tales used originated in Turkey, Greece, and Denmark, and they were kept as closely as possible to the recordings of the "ideal tales". Some oral features, e. g. the changes of tenses in the narrative flow within one period were therefore preserved[42]. The Danish Linguistic Board were then asked to comment on the tales. Excerpts: "We could in no way make the texts align with a linguistic norm which we ourselves would use. This is primarily because the texts belong to a genre which is totally alien to our practice with written language. It is completely meaningless to apply our normal criteria for correct language to texts which should reflect oral usage [. . .] at all events, we are pretty sure that many, including ourselves, find that the texts are written in a quaint language."

The difference between deviant norms for oral and written language actually makes it impossible to transfer anything like an oral style to print and expect the effect to be the same: in the narrative situation, the narrator's language was not q u a i n t. The problem is, presumably, insurmountable: for once editors try to rewrite the tale, they frequently wreak havoc with the contents, especially if,

[41] Berge (above, not. 28) Ch. IV, 161, cites one example where rhythmic sentences were given a special typography. A particularly interesting recent and ambitious attempt is Tedlock, D.: Finding the Center. Narrative Poetry of the Zuni Indians. New York 1972, which uses different typographical methods and layout so that the English translation can be read aloud.

[42] In general the texts we established tended to follow the rule of switching to the present tense in direct speech and moments which were dramatic. Both the Linguistic Board and folklorists found the number of shifts excessive, and we therefore made some smoothing out. But once again a "filter" is introduced.

like the brothers Grimm, they think that they can change language and not form[43].

As pointed out before, the audience of the printed tale will usually be different from that of the "ideal tale" in terms of sociolects and dialects, e. g. if the "ideal tale" recorded was told by somebody from another district and social class than the new readers. Once again there is a problem with loyalty towards the narrator, for laudable as it was that Evald Tang Kristensen gave lists of dialect words, the original narrator and his audience had immediate comprehension of what was said in the "ideal tales" in the Jutish dialect. At first glance substitution seems to be a way out, but there is really no guarantee that the "synonym" inserted has the same connotations as the original. We can illustrate this by a complex example, complex in so far as it involves not only linguistic features, but also what happens when there is a loss of the social context because of the passage of time: in Denmark, Evald Tang Kristensen recorded *Per Smed's Whip* from Mads Bæk in Tvis in 1874. The tale is about an old man, Per, whose young wife has an affair with the steward at the manor. They have agreed to get rid of Per in a "nice" way: accordingly the steward sets him some insurmountable tasks. An old woman in the wood helps Per, and the third time she tells him what is really happening and instructs him: "When you get home this time, then the steward is in bed with your wife, and then she will 'h a v e d i g a d S e n g e n', but that you must not." By modern Danish standards the words in spaced types would mean "try to get you in the direction of the bed". The dialectal sense, however, is "she wants you to go to bed (with her)". And presented with this we find a modern Danish reader who grimaces with disgust: "That sounds strange. Are the three of them to make love?" To the narrator, Mads Bæk, and the recorder, Evald Tang Kristensen, it was clear what happened: the old man returned home, where his wife would be lying, together with the steward, in one of the old curtained beds placed in the diningroom: and now she decides to have her husband killed outright—not "nicely". Therefore he must get to bed, where neither she nor the steward can be seen.

However these linguistic and contextual problems are solved by a modern editor, we will more often than not meet with one more remove from the "ideal tale", one more filter[44]. The very nature of these linguistic problems has probably prompted or inspired editors in various countries, e. g. Wilhelm Grimm in Germany, and Asbjørnsen and Moe in Norway, to develop a special tale style which is some kind of idealized and highly problematic folk-style[45].

In turn, then, the prestige accorded to such collections affects new editors who are possibly even less acquainted with real oral narrative style, and they—

[43] cf. Dollerup, C./Reventlow, I./Rosenberg Hansen, C.: Editorial Filters. A Discussion of the Allerleirauh Tales in Grimm (to appear), e. g. section IV.0.

[44] If this particular tale is published the problem is best solved by i l l u s t r a t i n g the episode.

[45] For the stylistic changes in Grimm, cf. e. g. Tonnelat, E.: Les Contes des frères Grimm. Paris 1912; for Asbjørnsen and Moe, Berge (various places).

and the audience—believe that they should prettify, embellish, expand, and "correct" tales—so that they add a number of new filters between the "ideal tale" and its "continuum", and the tales presented to the reading public for their "continua" in other dimensions.

The norm-systems embedded in the "ideal tales" will often not be palatable to a middle-class readership, and it is, therefore, small wonder if editors interested in sales change parts of the recordings, suppress details in the tales, or add new features which are in keeping with middle-class norms. Throughout the editing of the Grimm tales from 1812 to 1857, Wilhelm Grimm suppressed tales and episodes which seemed immoral, shocking to Roman Catholics, etc. He added religious remarks and actions; or changed people's behaviour so that it was up to the expectations of his reading public. In this way, he created a number of additional filters[46].

But even if the tales recorded are ostensibly identical with the "ideal tales" at the linguistic level, the loss of the social context, or rather middle-class ignorance of the original one, will weaken the realism in many tales because the new readers may not grasp the implications of e. g. the tasks: in both the Greek and the Danish tales they are very realistic, albeit slightly exaggerated in the form it gets, for generations of maids, viz. to a wash black linen white. This idea may just barely get through to a modern readership. But then other things, such as fixing a wooden bridge (section I.0.) and the necessity to get a scythe off the ground (see section III.1.1.) are not very realistic matters for modern people with concrete bridges and dry outhouses for their tools.

At all events the tales cannot be experienced as reflecting on daily life by the "new audience" in the same realistic way as with the original audience. Things that happen seem to be completely arbitrary once the frame of social reference is lost: and in turn, this affects people's expectations about tales: they are unrealistic, vague. And then it should be added that what we have described above is nothing, compared to what editors have done to make tales go down with an audience consisting of children.

III.3. "Filters" in translation

In principle, translations of tales should not represent any greater difficulties than ordinary translations, at least not at the semantic level[47]. But it is, in fact, rare to meet with a translator like R. M. Dawkins who can claim with justification that "The translations in this book are as close as English idiom permits: even to avoid tediousness I have made no omissions" (see *Modern Greek Folktales*, xxxvii). (There are modifications, though, but even so Dawkins' claim is reasonable enough.)

[46] cf. Tonnelat (above, not. 45) for the suppression of shocking features and religion. The others are mentioned in Dollerup/Reventlow/Hansen (above, not. 43) which also refers to other studies.

[47] The discussion pinpoints only few out of a host of problems in translation of folktales.

The truth is that even faithfully recorded tales may suffer severe cuts in translation[48]. If so, the tales translated are weakened further in relation to the "ideal tale": In Stith Thompson's *One Hundred Favorite Folktales* (Bloomington 1968, 369–376), we find the Danish *Anger Bargain*[49]: in this tale three brothers in turn take service with an ogre. He cheats the first two into getting angry, and hence to being cut, by making them go hungry. The English translation leaves out the father's last (spaced) words when they leave home: "I cannot afford to have you here at home any longer a n d f e e d y o u". And later, a whole paragraph describing how the ogre and his wife eat while they starve the first son, is left out: in other words, the key-words "hunger" and "food" are seriously underplayed in the English translation.

The social frame of reference may also be weakened considerably—thus it is telling that in the study we conducted, the Danish translator of the Greek tale cited (section I.0.) cut out or paraphrased some specific place-names: the names were meaningless to the non-Greek audience, but at the same time, the tale was robbed of some of the firm local rooting which the "ideal tale" had. In the new "orientation" a new filter was added.

Similarly the cultural differences will tell: it is not particularly realistic to talk of fig-trees in Denmark, so even some of the things, e. g. the phenomena, become unrealistic or alien, less comprehensible than they were in the country of origin. At all events, translations of tales from other countries will, because they are of necessity aprioristically less realistic in their new environs than in their original one, contribute to the alienation of the tales we read, from the "ideal tales" in the unique storytelling event.

IV.0. Concluding remarks

As a generic term folktales are read and studied—and we cannot deny the legitimacy of experiences and studies taking place at many dimensions and removes from the "ideal tales", e. g. of children's reading of fairytales, or different cultures' folktales, and the like.

On the previous pages we have posited the existence of an "ideal tale" which exists in a unique "continuum" presupposing a narrative contract between a narrator and his audience at a specific place in space and time in an oral dimension with a dynamic social interplay. If recorded, an "ideal tale" is subjected to some filters, possibly orientations, and another tale comes to exist in another dimension where it can release other, but individual narrative "continua" without instantaneous feedback to the narrator. To claim that there is identity between tales in different dimensions after they have passed filters is

[48] It is quite normal for publishing houses that give out translated works to stipulate that they can cut out c. 10 % of the original at the translator's discretion.

[49] The original was narrated by Kristen Nielsen Egsgård, and given as "Tjenesten hos bjærgmanden" in Evald Tang Kristensen's magazine Skattegraveren (Januar–Juli 1887) 5–16.

meaningless—but then on the other hand, there is an indissoluble relationship between an "ideal tale" and tales derived from it in other dimensions and "continua". And the filters may have worked in totally arbitrary ways, or have been imposed deliberately, as orientations, perhaps out of ideological reasons which can be described.

There is no denying that the filters exist. And they cannot be done away with completely. And it seems to us that this has some important implications: Experiences of tales, and studies of the types just mentioned are legitimate, as long as it is understood that they have little connection with and do not have any bearing on "ideal tales" but refer only to the contexts in which they take place.

It is unwise of critics and folklorists to study folktales which have passed through filters without paying any attention to what their impact has been on the folktale at hand, and then claim that they make statements on the "ideal tale". On the other hand, it is, of course, possible to conduct scholarly sound studies which do have a bearing on the "ideal tales" and their contexts, provided the existence of filters is accepted and accounted for: the present article is also obliquely an argument that the filters can actually be described accurately and in detail, so that it becomes easier to make out at least parts of the "ideal tales".